

**Summary of Panel Discussion Key Points**  
**CSO 101 Brown Bag Event, 16 February 2012**

**Critical factors for successful outcomes in engaging with the ASEAN**

1. There has to be mutual trust and respect between CSOs and governments. There is a need to focus on sharing common objectives and openness in sharing respective agenda.
2. For both governments and CSOs, there is a need to prepare the participants by making them knowledgeable of the process of engagement.
  - ✓ CSOs must have adequate knowledge of what are processes and different bodies they want to engage in, and what are the mandates of these bodies.
  - ✓ CSOs engaging with the ASEAN and its member states should be clear on 'why' you engage with government and define the modes of engagement.
  - ✓ For individuals and groups involved in the engagement process, there must be an understanding of multi-dimensional aspect of issues. Individuals and group representatives in the engagement process should have an understanding of the interconnectedness of what happens in the forest and what happens outside the forest. There is a need to have knowledge on the historical and political point of view; and the dynamics (people politics) surrounding issues at hand.
  - ✓ There is a need to encourage the use of existing international norms. For instance, there is a need to recognize the historical background of marginalization of Indigenous Peoples. The UN declaration of IP rights serves as international normative framework IP human rights issues.
3. Ensure CSOs are organized. There is a need to ensure the CSOs represent genuine interest of groups and society, have the credibility and are accountable to groups of people they represent.
4. Both parties should have the willingness to address the language barrier (i.e. government using different 'language'-ways of working with CSOs). There must be a willingness to understand how to 'speak' to each other, and create a comfortable environment to work together.

Create opportunities to demystify stereotypes from both sides.

5. There has to be persistence and sustained engagement in all relevant processes in particular arena/s you want to influence.
  6. Funds must be made available to CSOs (especially people's organizations) to be able to participate and take part in the engagement process. There is a need to encourage financial support to organizations pushing boundaries to change power relationships and leveling the playing field for community stakeholders.
- ✓ Peer to peer learningConduct participatory research, involve the community in the knowledge generation to facilitate knowledge with the community so they themselves could understand and articulate better

- ✓ Promotion of good practices through knowledge sharing and expanding access to information
- 8. Leadership for both the governments and CSOs is critical. There is a need to have passionate and committed leadership and development of new generation of leadership.
- 9. Establish/tap networks that facilitates knowledge sharing and create opportunities for engagements.

**Lesson and recommendations in creating meaningful engagement between the ASEAN and CSO**

- 1. There is 'space' in the agriculture and forestry sector in the ASEAN as underscored in the ASEAN charter. This 'space' should be optimized. The 'space' has to be mapped out and clearly outlined. This may include setting up informal and formal mechanisms to allow a more active participation in CSOs.
- ✓ There is a need to establish legitimacy in the engagement. There is a need to build institutional structures that facilitates discussion of issues.
- ✓ The ASEAN secretariat can promote intensive engagement in various ASEAN initiatives and facilitate linkages for CSOs' engagements with particular member states.
- 2. The 'language' in the space is not defined. There is a need to define what is the process, what are the rules of engagement, and who are the actors.
- ✓ There is a need to have a process in articulation of dialogues with the ASEAN bodies. There is a need to filter out conflicts to have dialogues with the ASEAN.
- ✓ Map out the institutions/CSOs in the region, and encourage diverse CSOs to engage with the ASEAN bodies.
- ✓ CSOs across the region may need to organize themselves, identify issues and interest and concretize what to bring to bring forth for high level discussions and engagements with ASEAN bodies, member states and their representatives.
- 3. Funding support is needed for consistent participation and to develop resources to translate relevant information that will be carried out into actions and engagements.
- ✓ Development partner (funding agencies) of ASEAN recognizing the potential contribution of CSOs may need to allocate funds to CSOs.
- 4. It has to be clear who is represented and whose voices is spoken. Peoples/communities have the to be given the opportunity to articulate for themselves and not necessarily having an intermediary. Who frames the issues and the language used matters.
- 5. There is a need to further have 'infrastructure' building, form networks among peers, among governments to learn from each other.
- ✓ Networks can facilitate increasing the level awareness on issues of representatives and government bodies and continue to build capacities of CSOs (provide trainings, sharing information, etc)

6. Generate concise, practical information targeted for a given agenda. The nature of information, how it is provided, and timeliness of information given is relevant.